Create an environment that supports strategic business investments that enhances quality of life

Economic development plays a pivotal role in the health of, opportunities in, and prosperity of a community. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hanover County, like many others, faced numerous economic challenges. While the hospitality and retail sectors were hardest hit, businesses within the County were somewhat insulated due to a strong base in our agricultural, manufacturing, industrial, and warehouse sectors. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Hanover County continues to remain poised to exit the pandemic stronger than it entered. However, the County must continue to focus its efforts and resources towards the strategies and objectives that will further position itself to continue to attract and retain businesses in the County.

Hanover County continues to focus on ensuring a balance between the growth in economic development – within defined areas of the County – and maintaining the rural character of the community all while continuously providing transparency on upcoming economic development projects and impacts to the community. While the County has several initiatives to address economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial space, these projects will proceed thoughtfully with the intent to continue this balance between economic development and the rural character of the community. Continued and enhanced stakeholder and citizen participation will be a focus over the next several years. This is evident in several key initiatives that the Economic Development Department will engage over the next year, particularly seeking input from local SWaM businesses on strategies to help increase economic development opportunities for other SWaMs in Hanover County. Similarly, with economic indicators now trending positive, the update to the economic development strategic plan and a review of the existing strategic zoning program will be key initiatives of focus over the coming years. The Economic Development Department will continue to focus on attracting and/or recruiting new businesses and expanding existing businesses that offer wages that exceed Hanover County's average annual wage. Additionally, there is a continued focus to attract and retain businesses that provide jobs that offer above average wages for workers (labor force) in the County. The County's labor force participation rate – the County's population (excluding those that are retired, disabled, or under the age of 16) compared to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data on the County's workforce – has a target of 70% - which is considered top tier.

Economic Development touches many aspects of local government and its function is not relegated to a silo. Numerous governmental departments and stakeholders – across all sectors – play a critical role in the economic prosperity of the community. The following strategies and objectives were created to assist in providing context to the goal of facilitating the *creation of strategic business investments and good jobs that enhance the quality of life* in Hanover County. The corresponding key initiatives are the steps that the County intends to take to meet the strategies and objectives within the Economic Development strategic priority area.



Summary of Strategic Priority Area Strategies and Objectives

Strategies

- Enhance the number of jobs, average wages and capital investment in business with emphasis on targeted industries as approved by the Board of Supervisors
- Provide economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through initiatives and policies that support product development
- Increase awareness within the business community of policies, strategies, and practices that promote a business-friendly environment
- Develop healthy, sustainable economic growth and development strategies through engagement with community and economic development stakeholders

Objectives

- Expand the number of businesses that offer jobs above the current local average prevailing wage
- Encourage private landowners to ready potential strategic economic development sites (through rezoning) for sale through the Strategic Zoning Initiative
- Evaluate opportunities to expand product development to maintain market competitiveness
- Expand stakeholder involvement and engagement of the business community through outreach and business surveys
- Ensure the County is tracking appropriate data and metrics that line up with the County's economic development priorities
- Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA)
- Evaluate opportunities to expand the number of small, women-owned, and minority-owned (SWaM) businesses

Key Initiatives

Timeline - Next 6 - 12 Months

1.1. Identify and Update Key Economic Development Metrics

Timeline - Next 12 Months

- Develop a Strategy to Increase the Diversity of Business Amount of Small, Women-Owned, and Minority-Owned (SWaM) Businesses – Within the County
- 1.3. Development of Strategies to Increase Citizen Engagement in County Economic Development

Timeline - 12 - 24 Months

- 1.4. Update the Economic Development Strategic Plan with the Economic Development Authority and Obtain Stakeholder Participation
- Review the Role of the Economic Development Department in Tourism/Sports Tourism
- 1.6. Review the Advancement of New and Existing Strategic Economic Development Sites
- 1.7. Review and Update the Strategic Zoning Initiative (SZI)
- 1.8. Evaluate Economic Development's Role in Planning Cases Reviews
- Review Strategies to Identify and Increase (when appropriate)
 Marketable Properties, with County involvement, to Sustain
 Competitive Inventories
- 1.10. Conduct a Market Analysis Identifying Target Industries
- 1.11. Identify Economic Development Properties/Areas Consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan

Timeline - 24 - 48 Months

- 1.12. Evaluate County's Role in the Development and/or Marketing of Strategic Economic Development Zones
- 1.13. Evaluate Practices and Policies Regarding Project Incentives

1.1 IDENTIFY AND UPDATE KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT METRICS

The Department of Economic Development will identify and update metrics that will aid Hanover County in defining its economic development priorities for the next five years. The business community will be engaged to provide feedback in determining key strategic economic development metrics.

Related Strategy: Develop healthy, sustainable economic growth and development strategies through engagement with community and economic development stakeholders

Related Objective: Ensure the County is tracking appropriate data and metrics that line up with the County's economic development priorities

Initiative Timeline: Next 6 - 12 months (March - July 2023)

	ACTIONS
FY2023	 Engage key stakeholders (Board of Supervisors, EDA, local business community, citizens, etc.) Review historic demographic trends and metrics
	 Develop final list of economic development metrics Present final listing of metrics to stakeholders

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Updated metrics used in future economic development	Reports generated in FY24 and beyond
annual reports	will include new economic
	development metrics
% of new metrics developed used in new reports	100%

1.2 DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF BUSINESS - AMOUNT OF SMALL, WOMEN-OWNED, AND MINORITY-OWNED (SWAM) BUSINESSES - WITHIN THE COUNTY

The Department of Economic Development will develop a list of strategies that will seek to increase the amount of small, women-owned, and minority business in the County. Existing Hanover SWaM businesses and other key stakeholders will be sought for their feedback to assist in developing this list.

Related Strategy: Increase awareness within the business community of policies, strategies, and practices that promote a business-friendly environment

Related Objective: Expand the number of small, women-owned, and minority-owned (SWaM) businesses

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 months (October 2023)

	ACTIONS	
FY2023	 Identify and contact key stakeholders to solicit their assistance in developing 	
	strategy list	

- Query stakeholders for their feedback
- Contact regional and other localities to research their strategies
- Draft strategy list to include known resource implications and implementation timeline
- Present strategy list to County Administrator
- Present strategy list to Economic Development Authority
- Share final listing of strategies to stakeholders

	ACTIONS
FY2024	Present final strategies list to Board of Supervisors

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of final strategies listing	September 2023

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES TO INCREASE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Economic Development will identify strategies that will seek to increase citizen engagement and involvement in County related economic development. The development of these strategies will focus on increasing citizen awareness of local economic development strategies and goals as well as increasing citizen feedback and involvement particularly in the areas of economic development policies.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan – a robust planning document that has extensive citizen engagement and feedback – Economic Development will also evaluate the County's existing economic development zones to help better define future targeted areas for economic development. It is anticipated that extensive citizen engagement will be obtained through this specific action.

Economic Development staff will develop a listing of strategies to increase citizen engagement and will work with staff in the Planning Department to review and align these strategies with the development of long-range economic development goals and objectives as part of the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Related Strategy: Develop healthy, sustainable economic growth and development strategies through engagement with community and economic development stakeholders

Related Objective: Expand stakeholder involvement and engagement of the business community through outreach and business surveys

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 months (Fall 2023)

	ACTIONS
FY2023	Meet with key internal staff to brainstorm on strategies
	 Select and identify key business stakeholders to review strategies and provide feedback
	Finalize listing of strategies (to include recommended metrics)

- Meet with Planning Staff to discuss alignment of strategies within the Comprehensive Plan and evaluate existing County economic development zones and identify new areas for future, recommended economic development zones
- Present final listing of strategies to County Administrator for review and approval
- Present final listing of strategies to the EDA for review and approval

	ACTIONS
FY2024	Implementation of strategies
	Incorporation of economic development zone updates in the Comprehensive
	Plan

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of strategies listing	Strategies listing approved by County Administrator and EDA by June 30, 2023
Implementation of strategies	FY2024

1.4 UPDATE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY AND OBTAIN STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

The Department of Economic Development, working closely with the Economic Development Authority, will seek to update their economic development strategic plan while also seeking to encourage and engage key stakeholders to participate in this process.

Related Strategy: Increase awareness within the business community of policies, strategies and practices that promote a business-friendly environment

Related Objective: Expand stakeholder involvement and engagement of the business community through outreach and business surveys

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 - 18 months (Dec. 2023)

	ACTIONS
FY2023	Develop list of stakeholder participation engagement strategies for consideration
	Implement engagement strategies
	Assess feedback from strategies
	Share feedback with local community before plan is approved

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
No. of stakeholders participating in strategic planning	100 - 200
sessions	

% of stakeholders engaged in strategic planning sessions	80%
that are satisfied or very satisfied with results	

1.5 REVIEW THE ROLE OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT IN TOURISM/SPORTS TOURISM

The Department of Economic Development will work with various County departments to assess the County's strategy on tourism/sports tourism in the County.

Related Strategy: Develop healthy, sustainable economic growth and development strategies through engagement with community and economic development stakeholders

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 months – 24 months (December 2023)

	ACTIONS	
FY2023	 Meet with County Departments to strategize on and determine County's role in 	
	the tourism/sports tourism industry	

	ACTIONS
FY2024	Develop a tourism/sports tourism plan
	Review plan with County Administrator
	Present plan to the Board of Supervisors
	 Upon legislative approval - begin engaging prospects to promote Hanover County
	as a destination for targeted tourism events

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of a tourism/sports tourism plan	Plan drafted by County
Number of tourism events consistent with tourism	# of tourism events held annually (tbd)
strategy	

1.6 REVIEW THE ADVANCEMENT OF NEW AND EXISTING STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

There are numerous land sites throughout the County that are poised for economic development. These sites are rated as Tier I, II, III, IV or V per the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program; Tier I being the least developed and ready for immediate development to Tier V being a site that has all permits in place and is ready for site disturbance. Tier III sites are zoned for industrial or commercial development use and have no or minimal infrastructure. As a result, a comprehensive listing of Tier III locations is a tool to assist in attracting prospective businesses to the County in areas already zoned accordingly.

The Department of Economic Development will review sites throughout the County to determine the appropriate tier rating and propose the advancement of those strategic sites that fit with the County's long term economic development goals and objectives and the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Related Strategy: Provide economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through incentives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Services Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 24 months (July 2024)

	ACTIONS
FY2023	Review key strategic economic sites in conjunction with the EDA
	 Propose new strategic economic development sites that fit within the County's
	current strategic economic development goals and objectives
	 Review key findings with departments, Board of Supervisors, and community
	stakeholders

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Develop an inventory of sites ready to replace or	Completion - July 2023
replenish properties taken down for economic	
development projects in order to maintain 500 acres of	
Tier 3+ property	

1.7 REVIEW AND UPDATE THE STRATEGIC ZONING INITIATIVES (SZI)

The SZI is an award-winning program that incentivizes property owners with land holdings in areas designated for commercial and industrial development to rezone for speculative commercial and industrial purposes, while deferring many of the costs normally associated with rezoning to later in the land development process. Once rezoned, the property is eligible for entry into state, regional, and local economic development marketing databases. The Department of Economic Development in conjunction with the Planning Department will review and assess the existing program's criteria.

Related Strategy: Provide economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through initiatives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Encourage private landowners to ready potential strategic economic development sites (through rezoning) for sale through the Strategic Zoning Initiative

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 - 24 months (July - March 2024)

	ACTIONS
FY2023	 Develop strategy for advancing key properties ideal for economic development in the Suburban Service Area
	Begin comprehensive review of the SZI

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- Complete a comprehensive review of the SZI
- Review SZI updates with the Economic Development Committee and obtain approval
- Review and obtain Board of Supervisors (BOS) approval on SZI updates

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
A comprehensive update to the SZI approved by the BOS	BOS approval by June 30, 2024

1.8 EVALUATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT'S ROLE IN PLANNING CASES REVIEWS

Currently, all planning cases go through an assessment by the County's Department of Planning. However, these cases do not consider the economic development implications that the planning request may have on the County. Economic Development and Planning will assess the feasibility of integrating economic development implications of each planning case in the review, recommendation, and approval process. Potential options for process changes include, but are not limited to, the use of a checklist or guide to serve as a reference for planning staff during review, and routing cases to Economic Development. Recommendations will also consider any potential impacts to staff workload and turnaround time for completing reviews.

Related Strategy: Develop healthy, sustainable economic growth and development strategies through engagement with community and economic development stakeholders

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 months

	ACTIONS
FY2023	 Economic Development and Planning staff meet to jointly review existing planning case process and how Economic Development can be part of the review process Draft recommendations are developed Recommendations to be reviewed by the County Administrator for feedback and approval Consideration of the implementation of a "test" run of the process will be sought to determine feasibility of recommendations

	ACTIONS
FY2024	 Modifications of the updated process will be recommended, as applicable based on the results of the test run
	Final recommended process will be presented to the County Administrator
	Final recommended process will be presented to the Board of Supervisors
	Implementation of new process

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Approval of process recommendations by Board of	Oct. 2023
Supervisors	

1.9 REVIEW STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND INCREASE (WHEN APPROPRIATE) MARKETABLE PROPERTIES, WITH COUNTY INVOLVEMENT, TO SUSTAIN COMPETITIVE INVENTORIES

There are numerous parcels of land throughout the County owned by private landowners or developers that have a marketable and competitive economic development advantage. An assessment will be conducted to evaluate incentive practices and policies regarding the feasibility of the County purchasing properties as a way to increase available marketable properties. Economic Development, working with the Planning Department, will assess this concept and provide policy recommendations for the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors. The focus of this assessment is to determine how best to broaden available marketable properties to enhance the County's economic development competitiveness.

Related Strategy: Provide economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through initiatives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 months

	ACTIONS
FY2023	 Economic Development and Planning will assess policies and practices to increase marketability of properties Economic Development and Planning develop draft policy and fiscal implications Draft policy position to be reviewed by County Administrator

	ACTIONS
FY2024	Draft policy position to be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Approval of policy recommendations by Board of	Finalized by Dec. 2023
Supervisors	

1.10 CONDUCT A MARKET ANALYSIS IDENTIFYING TARGET INDUSTRIES

This project will help determine which specific industry sector(s) best fit within Hanover County's strategic economic development priorities. A targeted industry sector market analysis will result in recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to help guide this decision.

Related Strategy: Enhance the number of jobs, average wages and capital investment in business with emphasis on targeted industries as approved by the Board of Supervisors

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Services Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 – 24 months

	ACTIONS	
FY2024	Perform targeted industry sector market analysis	
	 Engage with community and stakeholders for feedback 	
	 Present recommendations to Board of Supervisors on which industries to target 	
	 Develop strategy on how to proceed with targeting the selected industries 	

	ACTIONS
FY2025	Begin pursuing targeted industries for commercial development

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Presentation of recommendations to the Board of	Recommendations approved by Board
Supervisors	of Supervisors by June 30, 2024
Percentage of new business that open, expand or	tbd
relocate to Hanover County that fit within selected	
targeted industry classification	

1.11 IDENTIFY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES/AREAS CONSISTENT WITH THE COUNTY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The identification of properties and/or areas for economic development is critical to the strategic and planned future growth of the County. This identification should be done in conjunction with the County's comprehensive plan. Economic Development and Planning staff will assess both the current and, once finalized, the new comprehensive plan to clearly identify the properties and/or areas within the County that are noted as being planned for economic development. This identification helps to ensure that the areas planned for economic growth are targeted for economic development while the areas that are planned to stay rural, remain rural.

Related Strategy: Provide economic and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through initiatives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Services Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: Next 12 -24 months

	ACTIONS	
FY2023	Economic Development and Planning staff meet to identify areas for economic	
	development that are consistent with the existing comprehensive plan	

 Planning Department continues development on the update to the comprehensive plan

	ACTIONS
FY2024	 Planning Department continues development on the update to the comprehensive plan
	 Economic Development and Planning meet to review final draft of the updated comprehensive plan and begin final identification of areas identified for economic development
	Identification of targeted areas complete

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of listing of targeted areas for economic	Listing developed prior to 6/30/24
development	
All target economic development areas are linked to the	100% of identified areas are consistent
final comprehensive plan	with the final comprehensive plan

1.12 EVALUATE COUNTY'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND/OR MARKETING OF STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONES

There are numerous sites designated as major zones throughout the County that are either not developed or need to be redeveloped. The Department of Economic Development will work with the Planning Department to determine the County's role and potential processes for evaluating zones for future marketing, and economic and redevelopment opportunities – in conjunction with the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

Once the evaluation is finalized, recommendations will be brought to the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors for further consideration on whether investment in the zones would be beneficial and feasible for the County as well as next steps.

Related Strategy: Provide economic and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through incentives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Evaluate opportunities to expand product development to maintain market competitiveness

Initiative Timeline: Next 24 months

	ACTIONS	
FY2023	Economic Development and Planning identify all major County gateway zones	
	 Economic Development and Planning draft position paper on role of evaluating 	
	zones for marketing, economic, and redevelopment opportunities in connection	
	with the development of the County's comprehensive plan.	

	ACTIONS	
FY2024	 Position paper to be reviewed by the County Administrator 	
	 Position paper to be presented to the Board of Supervisors 	
	 Identification of next steps to include the potential study of specific zones 	

	ACTIONS
FY2025	Engage in study of a specific corridor

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of a prioritized listing of all County zones	Listing developed prior to 6/30/23
Development of an outline and timeline to engage in	Timeline developed prior to 6/30/23
study	

1.13 EVALUATE PRACTICES AND POLICIES REGARDING PROJECT INCENTIVES

An assessment will be conducted to evaluate practices and policies on providing incentives for economic development projects within the County. This will include an assessment on incorporating projects' return on investment – to include prospective community benefits – when such incentives are provided. Economic Development will provide its analysis along with policy recommendations to the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors. The focus of this assessment is to determine how best to increase economic development within the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA), broaden available marketable properties, and enhance the County's economic development competitiveness.

Related Strategy: Provide economic development and redevelopment opportunities for commercial, retail, office, flex, and industrial space through incentives and policies that support product development

Related Objective: Drive strategic and competitive economic development expansion in the defined Suburban Service Area (SSA)

Initiative Timeline: 24 - 48 months

	ACTIONS	
FY2025	conduct review of existing county internetve practices and pointes	
	 Research peer localities incentive practices 	
	Develop draft report	

	ACTIONS	
FY2026	Present final report to County Administrator	
	 Present final report to Board of Supervisors 	
	 Implement recommendations from final report 	

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Development of final recommendations and report	Report presented by 12/31/25

Implement recommendations from report	1/1/26
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Appendix A: Key Performance Measures

The following key performance measures are currently used to track and measure the success in achieving the goal within each of the strategic priority areas. These performance measures track the actual performance of each metric over time using quantitative data and will be reviewed regularly against applicable target levels to check the County's progress.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TARGET
Number of jobs in Hanover County	5% or greater job growth (over 5 years)
Unemployment rate	4% or less unemployment rate
Average annual wage	Average annual wage in excess of
	\$49,029
Number of acres of Tier 3+ sites based on Virginia	Maintain at least 1,000 acres of Tier 3+
Business Sites Readiness Program (VBSRP)	inventory
Enhance business survey and outreach program to	150 business surveyed/assisted each
engage businesses in economic development	fiscal year
opportunities	
Ratio of jobs to labor force	1 job per 0.7 - 1 worker
Ratio of commercial/residential tax base property	Attain 25% - 30% commercial to
assessments	residential ratio
Commercial construction permit value (tax-based	\$50 million of new commercial
commercial construction)	investments (based on construction
	permits)

